

For Harold from Kay Fineman

COULD MYSTERIOUS ID *CARD* LINK OSWALD TO ASSASSINATION PLOT?
'DD 1173' RAISES INTRIGUING QUESTIONS

Houston Post (HP) - SUNDAY November 22, 1992

By: RAY LAFONTAINE AND MARY LAFONTAINE, SPECIAL TO THE HOUSTON POST

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Word Count: 1,411

TEXT:

DALLAS - On the tense evening of Nov. 22, 1963, the 112th Army Intelligence Group at Fort Sam Houston transmitted a confidential priority message to the U.S. Strike Command at Florida's McDill Air Force Base.

The cable from San Antonio to McDill, which remained on Red Alert after that morning's assassination in Dallas of President John F. Kennedy, identified arrested suspect *Lee* *Harvey* *Oswald* as a "*card*-carrying member of (the) Communist Party."

He was not, but 29 years ago today Oswald was carrying a card that suggests he might have been an employee of an organization much closer to home.

Found by Dallas police in Oswald's wallet - along with a photograph of his wife, Marina - was a U.S. Department of Defense "Uniformed Services Identification and Privilege Card," or more simply, a DD Form 1173.

It's a card officials today say Oswald should not have had.

But why he had it and what it might have meant is one of a lengthy list of unanswered questions surrounding Kennedy's death. Also in question is whether Oswald - as the Warren Commission concluded - acted alone in shooting the president that clear, crisp day in Dallas, or was part of any one of several conspiracies that have been offered up over the past three decades.

DD 1173 bears Oswald's photo, the circular seal of the U.S. Department of Defense, and what appears to be a postmark - dated Oct. 23, 1963, less than a month before the assassination.

Oswald was issued the identity card by the U.S. Marine Corps on Sept. 11, 1959, nine days after his request for a dependency discharge from the corps was approved. His stated reason for the request was to support his mother, Marguerite, then living in Fort Worth.

Five weeks after receiving the card issued at El Toro Naval Air Station, Santa Ana, Calif., Oswald crossed the Finnish-Soviet border on his way to Moscow. Two weeks later, he announced his intention to defect to the Soviet Union.

Oswald's military record notes the identity card was issued "in accordance with paragraph 3014.5 PRAM (Personnel Records and Accounting Manual)." However, this paragraph pertains only to the issuance of USMC member cards and does not apply to a DD 1173. The appropriate card for the discharged Oswald, as stipulated by the PRAM, would have been a 2MC (RES), reflecting his new status in the Ready Reserve.

Lt. Kim Miller, a Washington spokeswoman for the Marines, said Oswald could have been issued a DD 1173 for one of two reasons: because of an injury while on active duty entitling him to medical privileges, or because he was a civilian employee overseas needing a military ID.

But records do not show an injury to Oswald, and civilian employment, she adds, "would not have been annotated to his military book."

A similar finding was reached by Dennis Vetock, reference historian of the U.S. Army Military History Institute of Carlisle, Penn. He notes

issuance of DD 1173 was regulated under Defense Department guidelines at the time Oswald received his card. These guidelines limited recipients of such cards largely to military dependents "and civilians who require military identification."

If such a card was issued in error, says Vetock, "it wouldn't have been authorized, and immediately upon being called to official attention would have been changed or revoked."

There is no evidence Oswald's identity card was revoked, even after he defected, threatened to provide military secrets to the Russians and received an undesirable discharge from the Marine Corps in 1960. Oswald's card did not expire until Dec. 7, 1962.

Oswald's card was not printed in the photographic evidence of the Warren Commission's report on Kennedy's assassination. But the head-on photograph of Oswald on DD 1173 is the same as two other Oswald photos included in the report.

One is Warren Commission Exhibit 2892, identified by the FBI as "Photo taken in Minsk." (The "Minsk" photo has a white circular cutout in the lower right hand corner corresponding to the overlapping postmark on the Defense Department card.)

The Minsk contradiction - Oswald's trip to Russia occurred after the issuance of the DOD identity card - was not evident to the commission, apparently because the card was not made available to its members by the FBI.

In December 1966, when the FBI finally released Oswald's Defense Department identity card to the National Archives, it arrived "nearly obliterated by FBI testing," according to archivist Sue McDonough of the Civil Reference Branch. "The color, the image, the printing, everything is gone," she said. "You couldn't use it to show anything."

Challenging the archivist's assertion, FBI spokesman Bill Carter of the Public Affairs Office in Washington asks, "How does she (McDonough) know it was tested by the FBI? Does she have a report?"

"Who else but the FBI could have done it?" McDonough responds. She adds that there are no pictures of the card in its unobliterated state at the archives.

According to assassination writer David Lifton, there is no mention of DD 1173 in any FBI testing reports he has reviewed. These include non-published commission documents, FBI Dallas field office reports and FBI summary reports to the Warren Commission.

The same photo of Oswald on DD 1173 also appeared in the Warren Report (Cadigan Exhibit 15) on a phony Selective Service classification card found in Oswald's possession with the name Alek James Hidell, the name he supposedly used to purchase the assassination rifle by mail order.

It was the 112th Army Intelligence Group at Fort Sam Houston that notified the FBI that he was carrying a fraudulent Selective Service card. How the military knew this has never been explained.

The Hidell card, with its photograph of Oswald, was one of two major links between Oswald and the assassination weapon. The other is a photograph - known by its commission designation of 133A - allegedly taken of Oswald brandishing the weapon in the back yard of a home in the Oak Cliff area of Dallas.

The 26-volume Warren Commission publication acknowledged the existence of the DOD identity card in only two places: Oswald's military record and the report of FBI agent Manning Clements, who listed the contents of Oswald's wallet on the night of Nov. 22, 1963, after the Army intelligence

tip. Clements cited both the DOD identity card and the Hidell card.

But Clements' report did not reveal that the two cards had the same picture - or that the DOD identity card had a photo at all.

The Oct. 23, 1963, postmark on Oswald's DOD identity card is a further enigma. "If found, drop in any mailbox," the card's reverse side instructs. It then tells the Postmaster: "Return to Department of Defense, Washington 25, D.C."

Reached at Notre Dame University where he now teaches law, Robert Blakey, former general counsel to the House Select Committee on Assassinations, considered the possibility that the card was lost, dropped in a mailbox, postmarked and delivered to the Defense Department.

"In that case," says Blakey, "Defense would have had to have given it back to Oswald. Interesting."

W.J. Liebeler, an associate counsel to the Warren Commission, expresses similar surprise at the convolutions of Oswald's mysterious ID card.

"This is all new to me," he says. "Two things seem odd. The picture identified as Oswald in Minsk, and the postmark on the defense card. The postmark implies the Defense Department either mailed it back to him or gave it to him at some time."

If so, that would have happened less than a month before Kennedy's assassination. Was, as some conspiracy theorists suggest, Oswald working for the U.S. government at the time?

Renowned assassination researcher Paul Hoch of Berkeley, Calif., attempted to discover the significance of Oswald's DD Form 1173 as early as 1974.

Today, he says: "The HSCA (the House assassination committee) attempted to deal with the possibility that Oswald had been working with the U.S. government after he left the Marines. But as far as we know, they didn't deal with this card. It may have been the missing element."

CAPTION:
PHOTO

Found by Dallas police in Lee Harvey Oswald's wallet was this U.S. Department of Defense (DD Form 1173) identity card. Officials today say it is a card the accused assassin of President John F. Kennedy should not have had.

Also found in Oswald's wallet is this phony Selective Service classification card, bearing the name of Alek James Hidell - the name law enforcement officials say Oswald used to purchase the rifle they contend he used to kill Kennedy.

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DESCRIPTORS: US; HISTORY; PROBE; CONTROVERSY

Date: Sun Nov 22, 1992 4:37 pm EST
From: David Lifton / MCI ID: 421-3044

TO: Anne Schupack / MCI ID: 455-9575

TO: * Roger Bruce Feinman / MCI ID: 379-4955
Subject: Houston Post story 11/22/92

Thought you'd be interested in the following memo:

MEMO TO FILE

FROM: David Lifton; 11/21/92 5:20 p.m.

Sundays Houston Post is running a story which all students of the assassination should know about. Should it not make the wires, here is a brief summary---based on the story as it appears in the bulldog (Sat) paper.

When Oswald was arrested, he had on his possession a Department of Defense ID card issued to him when he left the Marines. It was not the standard reservists card---rather it was called a DD Form 1173. According to a Marine spokesperson, the card should only have been issued for one of two reasons: injury during active duty, entitling him to medical privileges, or (2) because he was a civilian employee of DOD overseas needing a military ID.

The card is authentic. Its serial number ---N 4,271,617---is listed in the Folsom Exhibits of the Warren Commission as part of his official military discharge (see Vol 19, p.665). It is also listed in the FBI report of Manny Clements who listed the contents of Oswalds wallet. (See Warren Report, p. 616)

At issue is why this card was issued, and what it means. The defense department told the Houston Post writers---Ray and Mary LaFontaine---that if the card had been issued by mistake, it would have been revoked immediately upon being called to official attention.

Another facet of the story concerns a postmark on the card: Oct. 23, 1963 The card states, on the back, If found, drop in any mailbox, instructing the postmaster: Return to Department of Defense, Washington 25, D.C. The postmark of Oct 23, 1963, suggests that Oswald lost the card, that it was returned to DOD, and that it was then returned to him (yes, even though he was a returned defector, who had received a undesirable discharge from the reserve. Isnt bureaucracy great?)

Another point: the card was not given to the Warren Commission (although the picture from the card is the one used to make the fake Hidell ID, and that same picture was also mislabeled by the FBI, as a photo of Oswald in Minsk.)

The original of the card was turned over to the National Archives, in 1966 as FBI item B1-3. However, it was practically destroyed in testing--so much so that the Archives cannot make a dupe of it for anyone, because it is just a big blotch. In the FBI denies destroying the

evidence---but it is in fact useless as evidence.

The released FBI materials do not contain a picture of the card. The photo run in the story comes from the archives of the Dallas Police Department---who fortunately photographed the evidence before turning it over to the FBI. It will be interesting to see whether the Houston Post story is picked up and run by any wire service. I think the existence of this card should be known.

Anyone who wants an original of the story should contact the State Desk of the Houston Post. Also, it wouldnt hurt for anyone who has press connections to call their favorite journalist---AP or Reuters---to see that this is disseminated nationally. David Lifton

Date: Sun Nov 22, 1992 8:54 pm EST
From: Roger Bruce Feinman / MCI ID: 379-4955

TO: David Lifton / MCI ID: 421-3044
Subject: Oswald DOD ID Card
Message-Id: 30921123015403/0003794955NA3EM

I have uploaded your entire message (sans e-mail IDs) to Compuserve's journalism forum, which is inhabited by print and broadcast journalists across the country. Also, be sure you get a copy of today's (Sunday's) Outlook section in the Washington Post. Your intro to Kerry Thornley's book is mentioned.

Nice. I spoke to Mary LaFontaine at ASK and intend to give her a call. As usual, the best evidence (pardon me) is the stuff that existed in its virgin state before the case was co-opted by the feds. The business about Oswald's photograph is especially interesting.

Let's see how they wiggle out of this one. I was depressed after reading this morning's story in the WP. I feel better now.

Notes on telephone conversation with Mary LaFontaine 11/24/92 10:30 pm

Story hasn't been put on the AP wire.

Links LHO to employment with US govt possibly as late as 10/23/63.
DOD ID card which he had when he was arrested.
Checked with history dept of the Marines.
Contacted Marines for official statement. They checked military regs, records, history department. Either he had been injured on active duty and thus entitled to military/medical privileges (they said that was not the case) or.. only other possibility is he was a civilian employee.

Didn't try for any reaction from Dallas Police. They took a picture of the card before it went to the FBI. This is not the

first time the card has been published (see Jesse Curry's book).
Just the first time the appropriateness has been researched.

If he was a civilian employee that would not be annotated to his
military record.

Didn't try getting any reaction from the Secret Service.

No way it's a forgery. It's in his record by number (Folsom
exhibit).

Blakey did not recall seeing the card, but she is pretty sure the
HSCA had it.

MATTED PHOTOGRAPH Story

Clements examined the card on the night of the 11/22 and listed the
card in his inventory. But did it leave Dallas and become part of
the FBI investigation? He went to see LHO on the night of the
assassination on a tip from military intelligence. Did they
suspect he had a fake ID card?

Mary couldn't get the AP in Dallas to pick up the story and wanted
to know if I had any contacts that could help. I explained to her
that I've been out of the business for 16 years, and hardly in a
position to take it to CBS, but that I did post the story on
Compuserve's Journalism Forum. I suggested George Lardner, the
tabloids (Inside Edition, Hard Copy, Geraldo).

My impression was that the LaFontaines didn't do all of the follow-
up investigation they could have (DPD types, SS), and that they
didn't give enough consideration to the timing of the release of
their story, which she indicated was out of their control. She and
her husband are working on a documentary that they expect to finish
by next Fall, and that will be the end of their involvement. She's
frustrated, but I've been there.

Date: Wed Nov 25, 1992 12:57 pm EST
From: Roger Bruce Feinman / MCIID
TO: David Lifton / MCI ID: 42044
Subject: Oswald & Pentagon ID
Message-Id: 90921125175709/0003794955NA1EM

I've spoken at length with Mary LaFontaine, and I'm
persuaded that the work she and her husband have done on the
DOD identification card requires an official response.
While the jury is not yet out, I'm quite distressed over the
cold shoulder that she's received from the wire services and
mainstream media, although this is hardly surprising to
veterans. As distasteful as this is to me, I am constrained
to suggest further resort to Oliver Stone's attention-
getting abilities. He's going to be releasing a "director's
cut" of "JFK" with an additional 17 minutes of footage this

January. Perhaps he can be persuaded to hold a news conference coinciding with the new release to demand an official investigation.

Happy Thanksgiving.

Date: Fri Nov 27, 1992 2:24 pm EST
From: David Lifton / MCI ID: 421-3044

TO: * Roger Bruce Feinman / MCI ID: 379-4955
Subject: Your suggestion re Oliver Stone

Going to the pres via Oliver Stone is, I think, an interesting idea. I think the ideal person to convey such a request would be John Newman---first, because Oliver holds him in such high regard; second, because John is with military intelligence. But its mainly the first. I didn't know about this director's cut---I thought that might happen when they released the video. It didn't. So in what format is the director's cut---laser disk? An "augmented" video? A broadcast? Please provide details, because then I might better understand what they are trying to "market". Best,
David Lifton

Date: Fri Nov 27, 1992 6:36 pm EST
From: Roger Bruce Feinman / MCI ID: 379-4955

TO: David Lifton / MCI ID: 421-3044
Subject: Yours re Stone
Message-Id: 24921127233642/0003794955NA1EM

John Newman as facilitator is a good idea. The re-release is probably on tape. I learned about this in a UPI dispatch on what's coming in the home video market a couple of weeks ago, and they usually refer exclusively to videotapes. The director's cut, with 17 minutes added, will be accompanied by a documentary. It's bound to be a laser disk eventually. I spoke at length with Mary LaFontaine this week but did not raise this with her. She's understandably frustrated. But I'm satisfied she did her homework. I would have tried for more official reaction before running the story, but. . . the key point to get across to the press is that this card is not the type that would normally be issued to a reservist; they will use that tact if they can to throw cold water on the story. Queries: Would this card have gotten LHO onto domestic military bases? Was this card in his possession when he

Press RETURN for more; type NO to stop:

was arrested in New Orleans, and did the FBI find out about it? The military intelligence file on LHO/Hidell now especially significant for its destruction. In light of this development, I have posed some questions to Mary Ferrell to ask Marina along the lines of trying to determine whether Oswald might have discreetly stretched his income at military PX's purchasing merchandise, any medical prescriptions, haircuts, etc., items that might be traceable to a manufacturer's inventory. Why else would he have

needed to carry the card? I'll let you know if I get any response.
BTW, a number of people have d'loaded my post on Compuserve's
Journalism forum, and I have gotten questions. Regards, Roger.

#: 782672 S0/Outbox File
26-Nov-92 4:32:00
Sb: What Mary has to say
Fm: MAIL [forwarded msg]
To: Duke Lane [WPMA] 76004,2356

Time is catching us. -roger-

--- Forwarded Message ---

#: 490 S0/CompuServe Mail [MAIL]
25-Nov-92 21:38 EST
Sb: Baker, Bentley, Clements
Fm: Mary M Ferrell [76450,706]

Dear Roger,

In today's mail I put a printout from my database with the bit of information I have on the above three. T. L. Baker's address does not appear in the 26 volumes. He makes a very brief statement in Vol. 4, pg. 248. The "Baker Exhibit" is a picture of the TSBD in Vol. 19, p. 112. The 1963 and 1964 Dallas City Directories do not have any T. L. or any name beginning with T. Baker who was a Dallas policeman.

Paul L. Bentley is still listed in the current Dallas telephone directory. This does not mean that he is alive. Many times, the widows of men leave the phone in the same name it has been listed for many years. The phone number listed today is (214) 349-0795.

Manning Chamblain Clements died November 21, 1990, in Wimberley, Texas. He was survived by his wife Winifred. He had retired from the FBI in 1970 following 30 years as an agent. He had worked 8 years in the Attorney General's office. He was 81 when he died.

As I told you in the letter today, I plan to start a real search for T. L. Baker. I'll call Jean Hill (who is on intimate terms with MANY former Dallas police). And, I'll call Jim Leavelle. Jim will know if Baker is dead or alive.

Love,
Mary

#: 782701 S0/Outbox File
26-Nov-92 5:01:00
Sb: Baker, Bentley, Clements
Fm: MAIL
To: Mary M Ferrell [76450,706]

Thanks, Mary. I look forward to your letter. Time is catching up with us. With a name like "Baker", he might as well have been a Smith or a Jones! What about the postal inspector, Holmes? He was also involved in Oswald's interrogation.

My mother kept my father's name on the telephone listing for years after he passed away, so I know exactly what you mean.

Jim Leavelle was a bit mysterious in his panel appearance at ASK. In response to a question whether he had disclosed all that he knew about the case, he intimated that there were still a few things he had not revealed. When you speak to him, you might ask him whether any of those have to do with Oswald's Department of Defense ID card.

Yesterday, I reviewed Sylvia's chapter on Hidell in light of Mary LaFontaine's investigation. Interesting.

I'm not going to pester Clements' widow on this, but I will try the Bentley number after the Thanksgiving weekend. (I'll bet Tony Summers is just licking his chops over all of this.)

By the way, I just saw a CD-ROM package with *every* telephone listing in the United States, business or residential, all on 3 disks. Isn't that amazing!

I forgot to mention in my notes on my conversation with LaFontaine that she said Wesley Liebler claimed to be surprised to learn about the card. Now, you know that I have no liking for what Oliver Stone went and did, but I understand that he's releasing a new video version of JFK in January with an additional 17-minutes of footage. He could probably get media coverage if he held a news conference coinciding with that new release of the video to call for an official inquiry into the matter of the identification card.

My mother bastes her turkey with a garlic-flavored mixture of things and right now my mouth is beginning to water. Excuse me.

Love,
-roger-

#: 783880 S0/Outbox File
27-Nov-92 0:40:00
Sb: Questions for Marina
Fm: MAIL
To: Mary Ferrell 76450,706

Dear Mary, she may be able to add some indirect dimension to this business of the Defense Department identification card. Let's let our minds wander a bit: Suppose that LHO meandered through several low-paying jobs in order to maintain a cover for some other activity in which he was involved. It stands to reason that he would have had to stretch every nickel, and we pretty much know that this was the case with him. But it also stands to reason that he may have discreetly tried to stretch those dollars at military PX stores if they were convenient to him. This could be true of merchandise that he bought or, if he ever needed prescription medications for any reason. The card might have been used for that purpose.

I have not gone back over Marina's testimonies, but did there ever come a time during their life in the USA when it occurred to her that he was buying things that she didn't think he could afford? What, when and/or where were

they living at the time. Did she ever know him to use prescription medications? Where did he get them? Where did he take haircuts? I'm sure that you and others in the Texas chapter of the Dealey Plaza Irregulars can formulate more and better questions than these, which I offer only as an example of a possible line of inquiry. My disadvantage here is that I never served in the military.

If there were any particular item (even one) possessed by LHO that we could trace to the inventory of a military PX, either through military records or through manufacturers records, it might be a clincher. When I get back to reviewing the FBI's FOIA release, I'm going to pay special attention to this. I will also be discussing this with Paul Hoch next time I talk to him. Love, Roger.

#: 783980 S0/Outbox File
27-Nov-92 2:20:00
Sb: Journalism Forum Traffic
Fm: MAIL [forwarded msg]
To: Mary Ferrell 76450,706

--- Forwarded Message ---

#: 173369 S9/Off The Record [JFORUM]
26-Nov-92 20:09:39
Sb: #172957-Oswald-Pentagon ID Card
Fm: j. dolan 74030,3022
To: Mark Loundy [NPPA] 70501,763 (X)

After reading the reply by Feinman, there is some discrepancy in the report, apparently. Oswald, when he left active service, was transferred for a time to the reserves for a total active and reserve time before full discharge. So upon leaving active service he would keep his card. It was only until later that the Marine Corps, after his defection, convened a board to give him a discharge under less than honorable conditions. Dishonorable or bad conduct discharges can only be given as the result of a court martial. (This can be verified through the Marine Historical Center in DC.) As for losing the card, and having it returned, it doesn't seem to be a Federal case. At the time he wasn't the alleged assassin, and a clerk could get it, look up an address, and sent it back without further checking. Even his defection didn't become a big issue until the assassination.

#: 783985 S0/Outbox File
27-Nov-92 2:25:00
Sb: Journalism Forum Traffic
Fm: MAIL [forwarded msg]
To: Mary Ferrell 76450,706

*Harold, after I posted
Lifton's original message to
the Journalism Forum of
Compuserch, and
whether it wasn't
just a regular ID
I replied as per
my notes from
La Fontaine and
this is what
came
back.
Roger*